

# **MEETING NOTES | September 13, 2012**

## **Santa Rosa Plain Basin Advisory Panel**

### **Meeting in Brief**

#### **Monitoring Element Underway**

The Panel began exploring the best way to develop a monitoring program for the Santa Rosa Plain. Technical consultant Tim Parker and project manager Marcus Trotta presented existing Sonoma County monitoring programs and statewide requirements for future monitoring. Members discussed key considerations including the importance of coordinating all monitoring efforts, linking land use to recharge, criteria for volunteer wells, and integrating monitoring data from adjacent watersheds. The Technical Advisory Committee will work on the monitoring program this fall and present a draft proposal to the Panel at the January 2013 meeting.

#### **Public Hearing October 23 at 10:00**

The Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors will consider a resolution of intention to prepare a Groundwater Management Plan. A public hearing, originally scheduled for Oct. 2, is now scheduled for Oct. 23 at 10:00 at the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Chambers. The resolution reflects input from the most recent Panel meetings. Panel members plan to attend the hearing, which is open to the public.

#### **Members Conducting Constituent Briefings to Solicit Feedback on Plan Goals**

Members began constituent briefings with the aim of both informing and soliciting feedback from the wider public on the planning process, goals and objectives. Panel members report support for the planning process and feedback to consider some broader concerns related to economic interests and the relationship between natural resources and tourism.

Members are available to conduct briefings and will continue to do so throughout this fall and again at future planning milestones.

<http://www.scwa.gov/srgroundwater/>

### **Action Items**

<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Action Item</b>
9/17/2012	Tim Parker	Provide links to California Water Plan updates
Done	Marcus Trotta	Post project flyer and monitoring presentations on SCWA website
9/2012	Gary Mickelson	Acquire water code sections outlining protocols to avoid cross-contamination
9/21/2012	CCP	Distribute draft water resources section for review by TAC members
10/11/2012	Panel members	Conduct constituent briefings and prepare report backs

### **Next Panel Meeting: October 11, 9:00 – 12:00, at 35 Stony Point Road**

- Goals and objectives
- Management components
- Constituent outreach report back
- Modeling scenarios

## **Monitoring Program and Data Protocols**

Technical consultant Tim Parker and project manager Marcus Trotta shared presentations on existing Sonoma County monitoring programs. The presentation aimed to catalyze the Panel's initial thinking about monitoring and generate key elements and issues for consideration at the next TAC meeting.

The Water Code requires local agencies to measure change in groundwater level, quality, inelastic land subsidence and the flow and quality of surface water. The *Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Management Planning* effort will adopt monitoring protocols that promote quality information and inform management. Monitoring protocols should generate information that promotes efficient and effective groundwater management. Metrics are designed to evaluate progress towards management objectives. Mr. Parker described previous groundwater management planning efforts in the Sonoma Valley and highlighted key process steps, monitoring components and trends, data uses and applicable lessons learned for the Santa Rosa Plain. That Sacramento Groundwater Management Authority illustrates another locally driven example of groundwater management planning.

The Sonoma County Water Agency has established programs that monitor groundwater level and quality in the Santa Rosa Plain. The California Statewide Groundwater Elevation Monitoring (CASGEM) program, launched recently, requires groundwater elevation monitoring for all 515 basins and sub-basins across the state. In cases where no local entities step forward to facilitate monitoring, the state Department of Water Resources (DWR) assumes this responsibility. Sonoma County is proactively working to fulfill CASGEM requirements, making the county eligible for potential funding for future planning and management. Across the county different monitoring entities coordinate groundwater level data collection and submit data to the DWR. The monitoring network includes approximately 60 wells across portions of 5 DWR-defined groundwater basins and sub-basins in the Santa Rosa Plain watershed.

## **BAP Insights**

During open discussion Panel members sought clarity on a number of topical issues covered during the presentations. Moreover, the Panel recommended that the TAC consider the following ideas when developing the GMP monitoring framework:

- Ensure coordination of all groundwater monitoring efforts
- Connect land-use planning to re-charge efforts
- Consider historical data and comparative studies of other basins
- Incorporate data from outside the basin
- Apply data from the USGS study
- Develop quality assurance criteria and incentives for volunteer well monitoring
- Determine appropriate protocols to avoid cross-contamination of wells
- Consider precipitation and fog in the monitoring framework

### **Next Step -- TAC to Develop Detailed Monitoring Proposal**

The presentations laid the foundation for the Panel to discuss monitoring and provide its initial thinking to the TAC. The TAC will focus on the details and key considerations for crafting a monitoring program and bring a detailed proposal to the Panel for refinement and approval. The TAC may come back to the Panel with additional questions as the process unfolds. The TAC will work on a monitoring proposal during October and November. A draft proposal will be presented at the January 2013 BAP meeting.

### **Public Hearing – Now Oct 23, 2012, at 10:00**

To fulfill a requirement of the Water Code the Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors will consider a resolution of intention to prepare a GMP. A public hearing, originally scheduled for October 2<sup>nd</sup>, is now scheduled for Oct. 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Panel will revisit revised governance language at its October 11<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The hearing will include a short presentation to the board and opportunity for public comment on the resolution. The board may adopt the resolution as currently drafted or consider changes. The resolution reflects input from the most recent Panel meetings. Panel members plan to attend the hearing and hope that members of the public will as well.

### **Constituent Briefings**

Members reported initial constituent briefings and perspectives gained on the groundwater management planning process, goals and expected outcomes. The following groups have received constituent briefings leading up to the September 12 BAP meeting:

- Community Alliance for Family Farms
- Sonoma County Water Coalition
- Sonoma County Water Alliance (Infrastructure Committee)
- Sierra Club Sonoma Group (Executive Committee)
- North Bay Association of Realtors (Government Relations Committee)
- Construction Coalition
- Fircrest Water Company (Board of Directors)
- Assemblywoman Mariko Yamada's staff
- Private well owners

### **Feedback Received**

Members shared the GMP draft goals and objectives with their constituents. One member also reviewed the groundwater primer. Reports generally suggest constituents are supportive of the planning effort with some expressing appreciation for the work of Panel members. Some expressed concern about surface water condition and preservation. Another raised the importance of water resources as it relates to wildlife and ultimately the impacts on tourism since the region is well known for its natural resources and wildlife. Someone else questions the effects of surface flow on the Laguna de Santa Rosa. One constituent group suggested the addition of "economic interests" to the overarching goal statement.

### **Briefings Key Outreach Tool**

The planning process is intentionally designed so that Panel members represent the wider public and seek input and represent input from others during plan development. Although

open to the public, Panel meetings are not structured as public meetings. Rather, members make recommendations and subsequently speak to their organizations and the broader public more generally to solicit additional input and bring a wider perspective into the process. Members have materials available for this purpose: the project fact sheet, talking points, and the groundwater primer as they continue to conduct constituent briefings. Meeting summaries in particular are structured to support outreach, particularly for Panel members attending monthly constituent group meetings. The “meeting in brief” is geared to serve as key talking points during monthly briefings.

### **Additional Briefings Underway**

Consistent with the Communication & Outreach Plan, members will begin briefing interested organizations in addition to their member organizations. Anyone requiring assistance to develop credibility with constituents should contact Project Manager Marcus Trotta. The goal of the briefings at this stage is to inform constituents about the overall planning process and solicit input on the draft goals and objectives. Several members committed to brief the following groups:

- Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce – Jennifer Burke, Michael Burns
- Rotary Clubs – Dawna Gallagher, Marcus Trotta, Jennifer Burke, Michael Burns
- League of Women Voters – Rue Furch, Dawna Gallagher
- Democratic Club – Rue Furch, Dawna Gallagher
- Kiwanis Club – Michael Burns, Jennifer Burke
- Friends of Mark West Watershed – Kara Heckert
- Russian River Watershed Association (including both the Board and Technical Working Group) – Damien Obid
- Russian River Watershed Council – Rue Furch
- Sonoma County Women’s Cattlemen – Kara Heckert
- Sonoma County Planning Commission – Rue Furch and Pete Parkinson
- North Bay Dairy Women – Kara Heckert and Ed Grossi
- Santa Rosa Board of Public Utilities (September 25 session with City Council) – Jennifer Burke, Marcus Trotta, Rue Furch backup

## **Other Updates**

### **Small Group Meeting Report**

A few panel members and the technical consultant met to answer questions and address the concerns of a Panel member. During the report back, the Panel member described his effort to make the GMP more complete, give the Panel good standing in the community and demonstrate due diligence, primarily through suggested changes to the goals and objectives. The technical consultant will incorporate the changes to the goals and objectives from this member’s as well as from others for discussion at the October 11<sup>th</sup> Basin Advisory Panel meeting.

### **Technical Advisory Committee**

The TAC convened its first meeting in August as a subcommittee of the Basin Advisory Panel. Members reviewed the TAC charge, discussed the early work plan, and offered feedback on a draft outline of the GMP. The TAC is not a decision-making body but rather works under the direction of the Panel to identify and prioritize science and technical needs, and to develop proposals for Panel consideration and approval for inclusion in the GMP. Regular TAC meetings will take place on the fourth Wednesday of each month from 9-11 a.m. at the Sonoma County Water Agency. TAC report backs will be a standing agenda item at Panel meetings.

### **Russian River Independent Science Review Panel**

Jay Jasperse of the Sonoma County Water Agency provided an overview of the recent formation of the Russian River Independent Science Review Panel. The Science Review Panel is a body of objective scientists aiming to establish a sound scientific basis for future water supply and watershed management decision making along the Russian River. From an original pool of twenty-five nominated scientists, a local group of scientists representing water suppliers, agricultural interests, and environmental watershed organizations eventually selected eight individuals to participate along with Panel chairman Dr. Matt Kondolf. Each selected Panel member met conflict of interest protocols established by the National Academies. The Panel's overarching task is to develop a conceptual model and description of physical and ecological processes and mechanisms that explain the hydro-geologic functioning of the area.

The Review Panel effort is funded through a partnership between the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Russian River Water Conservation Council, the Conservation Land Stewardship Institute, and the Mendocino County Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation District. In addition to providing an objective view of the system, the result of this effort may be leveraged for future funding from state and federal agencies to further improve scientific understanding or management. Success during the first two years may therefore lead to ongoing efforts. Interested parties are encouraged to find more information on the project website at [www.russianriverisrp.org](http://www.russianriverisrp.org). A public workshop will be held once some of the work is complete. A few questions posed and subsequent discussion among BAP Panel members included:

- The organizers are still determining whether the review panel's output will undergo a separate peer review.
- There is interest in subsequent studies south of the Dry Creek confluence.
- The Review Panel's work will hopefully inform and maybe enhance the biological opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service
- The rationale for inclusion of the Mark West watershed and Green Valley was to look more broadly at the watershed.